

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7624

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1012

E.O. 11652 - XGDS-1, DECLAS INDETERMINABLE

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJ: EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS DISPUTE

1. ON MARCH 12, I CALLED ON FONMIN BORGONOVO AT MY REQUEST, INTER ALIA, TO REVIEW THE STATUS OF GOES EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH HONDURAS.

2. BORGONOVO RELATED THAT PRESIDENT MOLINA HAD ATTEMPTED TO TELEPHONE LOPEZ ARELLANO A COUPLE OF TIMES EACH OF THE PREVIOUS TWO WEEKS BUT THAT LOPEZ HAS OSTENSIBLY BEEN UNAVAILABLE. FINALLY ACTING FONMIN PINEDA CALLED BORGONOVO TO INFORM HIM THAT LOPEZ IS OCCUPIED VISITING VARIOUS MILITARY GARRISONS AND TO SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR LOPEZ TO TELEPHONE MOLINA WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT FOR HIM TO DO SO. BORGONOVO GOT THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT LOPEZ IS EVADING NORMALIZATION CONVERSATIONS WITH MOLINA BECAUSE LOPEZ BELIEVES THAT IT IS NOW POLITICALLY INOPPORTUNE FOR HIM TO ENGAGE IN SUCH TALKS. MOLINA SEES NO POINT IN PRESSURING LOPEZ IN THIS REGARD AND IS WILLING TO LEAVE INITIATIVE UP TO LOPEZ TO RENEW TALKS.

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2. BORGONOVO EXPLAINED THAT MOLINA FELT OBLIGED, AS INDEED

DID LOPEZ, TO DENY RECENT UNFOUNDED COSTA RICAN PRESS REPORTS THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WOULD MEET NEXT JUNE TO SIGN NORMALIZATION AGREEMENT. TO HAVE KEPT SILENT, HE EXPLAINED, WOULD HAVE BUILT UP FALSE HOPES AND GIVEN IMPRESSION OF FAILURE IF NO PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE BY JUNE OR ANY OTHER ARBITRARY DEADLINE. ON THE SUBJECT OF TIMETABLE, BORGONOVO EXPLICITLY CONFIRMED THAT IF A COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO THIS DISPUTE IS TO BE REACHED, IT MUST BE DONE IN 1975. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, HE RULED OUT ANY CHANCES OF THE MOLINA ADMINISTRATION BEING ABLE TO COMPROMISE IN 1976 OR 1977, BOTH OF WHICH (ALONG WITH 1978) WILL BE ELECTION YEARS IN EL SALVADOR. WHILE THERE IS NO DATE FOR THE NEXT MOLINA-LOPEZ MEETING, BORGONOVO THINKS THAT THEY MIGHT GET TOGETHER IN SAN JOSE IF VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ MAKES A STOP THERE ON HIS RETURN TRIP FROM MEXICO AND ODEBER INVITES THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS TO MEET WITH HIM. OTHERWISE, MOLINA AND PEREZ MIGHT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TALK SOMETIME IN APRIL WHEN IT IS ODEBER'S TURN TO HOST THE NEXT "REGULAR" CENTRAL AMERICAN SUMMIT MEETING.

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, BORGONOVO STATED THAT HIS OWN STAFF IS ENGAGED IN RESEARCH IN GUATEMALAN AND SPANISH ARCHIVES TO DEVELOP DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF SALVADORAN TITLES TO BORDER TERRITORIES NOW IN DISPUTE WHICH HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN CONSIDERED PART OF EL SALVADOR. HE ALLEGED THAT IN 1884 HONDURAN AND SALVADORAN NEGOTIATIONS HAD INDEED REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE LOCATION OF THE ENTIRE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND EMBODIED THIS IN A TREATY WHICH THE HONDURAN LEGISLATURE REPUDIATED. HE PROMISED TO GIVE US A COPY OF THE STATEMENT OF HONDURAN NEGOTIATOR, CRUZ, SUBSTANTIATING THE AGREED BOUNDARY WHEN HE WAS CHARGED WITH TREASON BY THE HONDURAN LEGISLATURE. BORGONOVO CONTENDED THAT HIS 1884 BOUNDARY IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME ONE WHICH EL SALVADOR HAS RECOGNIZED OVER THE YEARS. HE BELIEVES THAT BY STRENGTHENING THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF SALVADORAN TITLES TO THE DISPUTED AREAS, "WE WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE GOH TO REACH AGREEMENT" ON THE BOUNDARY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATTER'S CONSTITUTIONAL THESIS THAT THE BOUNDARY WITH EL SALVADOR IS TO BE DETERMINED BY DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF TITLES AWARDED DURING THE SPANISH COLONIAL REGIME. BORGONOVO ALSO

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CONFIRMED THAT THE GOES IS STILL AGREEABLE TO PROCEEDING ON THE BASIS OF THE MEDIATION PROPOSAL THAT HE AND BATRES HAD NEGOTIATED LATE LAST YEAR WHICH THE GOH REJECTED IN OCTOBER.

4. I ASKED WHETHER BORGONOVO HAD RECEIVED HIS LATEST INVITATION FROM THE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT BUT WAS FULLY INFORMED ON THE MATTER. HE THOUGHT

THAT IT WOULD BE POINTLESS FOR HIM AND PINEDA TO MAKE A SPECIAL TRIP TO REPORT NO PROGRESS EXCEPT FOR PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL "GOOD WILL" GESTURE. HE THOUGHT THAT COMMITTEE OF SEVEN COULD WAIT FOR SUCH A REPORT UNTIL THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN MAY AND THIS WOULD BE HIS PROPOSAL TO PINEDA, UNLESS SOMETHING SUBSTANTIAL OCCURS BETWEEN NOW AND THEN. IN THIS REGARD, BORGONOVO AGAIN STATED HIS CONVICTION THAT IT WAS QUITE UNLIKELY THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WERE CAPABLE OF HAMMERING OUT AN AGREEMENT BY THEMSELVES WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE AND PAINSTAKING NEGOTIATIONS AT THE FONMIN AND STAFF LEVELS BEFOREHAND.
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